

Applicant Name Sanders County
Project Name Eliminating Failed and Obsolete Septic Systems in Sanders County

Project Abstract

The project would establish a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) with the \$100,000 Renewable Resource Grant. This fund would be accessible to eligible citizens in the county, to assist them with the cost of replacing their failed or obsolete system, or hooking into a municipal system if one is in close proximity. The loans would remove a significant barrier people face in bringing systems into compliance. The RLF would be administered by the Sanders County Community Development Corporation. The RLF is part of an emergency measure to correct immediate and serious threats to water quality, aesthetics, and the environment, as well as human health and safety. The next phase of the program would seek long-range solutions for proper sewage disposal for each community and homeowner in the county.

Sanders County did not permit septic systems until 1995. Over 80% of the homes were built before septic permits, resulting in many inadequate, obsolete, illegal, and non-functioning septic systems. Communities with a high density of older septic systems include: Thompson Falls, Noxon, Trout Creek, Heron, Paradise, and Camas. The County's Sanitarian office has dealt with over 40 failed septic systems since May 2005. Failures have included collapsed metal tanks, surfacing effluent, pipes discharging sewage directly into "air vents," and other illegal systems. Collapsing metal tanks present an additional safety concern, especially in residential areas.

Repairing these obsolete systems would "enhance the common well-being" of the citizens of and visitors to Sanders County by preserving and conserving water quality, a precious renewable resource.